

Status Report: Programmatic Subcommittee Work on Bridge Scour, Bank Stabilization, and Bridge Removal

March 2004 Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee

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Reviewed by: Programmatic Subcommittee

Why are we here today?

We are here to present a status report on the Programmatic Subcommittee's effort to develop multi-agency programmatic coverage for bridge scour, bank stabilization and bridge removal work.

Where are we now?

Bridge Scour and Bank Stabilization Activities

On January 7th, the subcommittee went through a process of identifying solutions to improve project delivery and permitting for these activities. The group agreed that the main problems associated with project delivery and permitting is reaching consensus on:

1. Project necessity;
2. Project design;
3. Environmental impact;
4. Mitigation required.

In addition, permit agencies have increasingly required more informational requests in processing applications for these activities. The permit approval process lacks a common approach in identifying impact and necessary mitigation for these activities. A significant amount of staff time is spent negotiating different environmental conditions between permit agencies. These issues have resulted in delayed project delivery and increased project cost.

Status:

- June 2004 -
 - Development of bank stabilization and in-water work guideline using existing documentation from various resources that will provide a consistent approach for designing and permitting scour and bank stabilization activities.
 - Development of bridge removal guidelines using existing documentation from various resources that will provide a consistent approach for designing and permitting bridge removal projects.

What is the expected programmatic product?

The group has agreed that each Bridge Scour and Bank Stabilization activity is unique and therefore a programmatic permit is not a viable option. In lieu of a programmatic permit, the group reached consensus that the best solution to address these problems is the development of a design and permitting guideline that establishes an agreed upon process for:

- determining risk-
- appropriate repair alternatives –
- repair design-
- impact assessment-.... and;
- required mitigation.

The guideline will help the applicant and permit agencies design and permit projects under a common approach that will lead to a more efficient acquisition of individual permits. The guideline will represent best available science and draw upon existing information found in the Integrated

Streambank Protection Guidelines, FHWA Hydraulic Engineering Circular Manuals, and other supporting documents.

How will the programmatic product apply to project delivery and permitting?

The subcommittee expects to include an implementation process in the guidelines that will identify multi-agency support, training, and instructions for use and applicability of the guidelines. Both project applicant and permit agency staff will use the guideline as a tool to meet common environmental standards through agreed upon project design techniques.

Are there additional programmatic solutions?

Additional programmatic products the group expects to develop include: 1. the Corps will establish clear thresholds for when these activities meet jurisdictional, exempt, or permit requirements; and 2. the subcommittee is currently in the process of developing issue papers that describe problems and solutions with local agency permitting processes. The subcommittee expects to discuss these issue papers for further resolution at the next TPEAC meeting in June.

Bridge Removal Activities

Similarly to bridge scour and bank stabilization work, the subcommittee went through an exercise in early January of identifying project delivery and permitting issues for bridge removal work. The group invited experts from the WSDOT Bridge and Structures Office to help define project delivery issues. As with the bridge scour and bank stabilization activities, the group agreed that bridge removal is very site specific regarding methods of removal and environmental impact and thus would not be very suitable for programmatic permit coverage (e.g. general HPA's). The group did agree, however, that a beneficial programmatic product would be to develop a guideline (similar to the bridge scour solution) that would identify agreed upon methods of bridge removal and the common environmental standards that would apply. This product would help project applicants understand the environmental standards that would be required for bridge removal in the early stages of project delivery. Examples of environmental issues where standards would be established include pollution/debris control, method of constructing falsework, and management of treated wood. The subcommittee expects to complete the bridge removal guideline by the end of May 2004.

Next Steps

Bridge Scour and Bank Stabilization Work:

- The subcommittee anticipates that by the end of May 2004, the scour and stabilization guideline will be final and ready for use in project delivery.
- The subcommittee will work with other regulatory agencies not currently participating in the process (USFWS and NOAA Fisheries) to review and comment on the manual.
- The subcommittee will identify training and outreach needs to implement the manual.
- The subcommittee expects to elevate white papers on local agency permit issues for review and comment at the next TPEAC meeting.

Bridge Removal Work:

- The subcommittee anticipates that by the end of May 2004, the bridge removal guideline will be final and ready for use in project delivery.
- The subcommittee will work with other regulatory agencies not currently participating in the process (USFWS and NOAA Fisheries) to review and comment on the manual.
- The subcommittee will identify training and outreach needs to implement the manual.